

Message Text

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12
ACTION AF-18

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R 081650Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7669
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
INFO USIA WASHDC

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USIA FOR IAA, ILA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL
SUBJECT: ALI-FOREMAN FIGHT PREPARATIONS

1. ENTOURAGE OF 12 AMERICANS CONCERNED WITH PROMOTION OF SEPTEMBER 25 ALI-FOREMAN FIGHT HAVE BEEN IN KINSHASA SINCE MAY 4 FOR SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS. DISCUSSION TOPICS RANGE FROM CLOSED CIRCUIT TV DETAILS TO REFURBISHING OF STADIUM, SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, STREAMLINING OF AIRPORT FORMALITIES AND MEANS OF ALLEVIATING WHAT APPEARS TO BE COLOSSAL SHORTAGE OF AVAILABLE LODGING FACILITIES.

2. GROUP IS MADE UP OF HANDLERS OF BOTH FIGHTERS, INCLUDING MANAGERS -- SADLER FOR FOREMAN AND HERBERT MUHAMMED, SON OF ELIJAH MUHAMMED, REPRESENTING ALI.

3. VIDEO TECHNIQUES, INC. OF N.Y., HANDLING CLOSED CIRCUIT TV COMMUNICATIONS, REPRESENTED BY PRESIDENT BARRY BURNSTEIN, AND DON KING, WHO APPARENTLY IS HANDLING THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS WITH ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS. HEMDALE CORPORATION OF

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N.Y. ALSO INVOLVED IN FIGHT PROMOTION, REPRESENTED

BY VICE PRESIDENT FRED SCHNEIER, BRITISHER JOHN DALY AND SEVERAL OTHERS.

4. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF MEETINGS AND VISITS TO STADIUM AND TRAINING FACILITIES, GROUP QUOTED IN PRESS AS BEING "VERY PLEASED" WITH SITUATION THUS FAR AND FURTHER STEPS PROMISED BY GOZ.

5. AT INVITATION OF SCHNEIER, BURNSTEIN AND DALY, USIS AIO SCHRAGER LUNCED WITH MEMBERS OF GROUP MAY 7. THEY REITERATED THEIR IMMENSE SATISFACTION WITH COOPERATION EXTENDED BY ZAIRIAN HOSTS THUS FAR.

6. SCHNEIER ASKED AIO WHAT EMBASSY WOULD BE ABLE TO DO. HE REPLIED THAT EMBASSY OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT EVERYTHING RUN SMOOTHLY AND WE PREPARED TO OFFER OUR SERVICES AND HELP WHEN APPROPRIATE TO ASSURE A FIRST CLASS EVENT. SCHNEIER EMPHASIZED HOW MUCH HE, FOR ONE, APPRECIATED THIS ATTITUDE AND INDICATED THERE HAD BEEN PROBLEMS (UNSPECIFIED) IN CARACAS.

7. EMBASSY ANXIOUS TO AVOID PITFALLS WHICH COULD OCCUR IN WHAT PROMISES TO BE AN IMMENSELY COMPLEX UNDERTAKING FOR A COUNTRY WITH NO EXPERIENCE WHATSOEVER IN SUCH MATTERS. EMBASSY THEREFORE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY LIGHT DEPT OR EMBASSY CARACAS CAN SHED ON MATTERS SURROUNDING FOREMAN-NORTON FIGHT AND ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR OF PARTICIPANTS.

8. THOUGH EMBASSY HERE, INCLUDING USIS, PLANNING MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE THROUGHOUT ENTIRE AFFAIR, THEIR APPROACH TO USIS OFFICER INDICATES GROUP IS CONCERNED AND DESIROUS OF EMBASSY COOPERATION WHEREVER APPROPRIATE. USIS OFFICER EXPLAINED TO GROUP THAT EMBASSY WOULD ATTEMPT TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE AND BURNSTEIN AND SCHNEIER SAID THEY WOULD KEEP EMBASSY CONSTANTLY INFORMED, THROUGH USIS OFFICER, OF WHAT IS GOING ON.
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9. SCHNEIER AND BURNSTEIN MENTIONED MAY 15 FIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE AT "METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART" (SIC) NEW YORK. APPARENTLY AS AN INDICATION OF GOOD FAITH, SCHNEIER ASKED USIS OFFICER IF HE SHOULD INVITE SOMEONE FROM DEPT TO ATTEND. USIS OFFICER REPLIED THAT IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE A NICE GESTURE AND HE WAS SURE IT WOULD BE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

SCHNEIER DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF INVITING AMB-DESIGNATE DEANE HINTON, BUT USIS OFFICER INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH BARRING ANYTHING UNFORESEEN, HE EXPECTED HINTON WOULD BE IN KINSHASA FOR FIGHT, HE PERHAPS WOULD NOT WISH TO ATTEND PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE HE HAS NOT YET BEEN OFFICIALY CONFIRMED. IN ANY EVENT, SCHNEIER SAID HE WOULD FOLLOW THROUGH. SHOULD DEPT DESIRE CONTACT HIM, SCHNEIER N.Y. PHONE IS 212/421-0922.

10. LOCAL PANAM REP GATT URGING HIS COMPANY PROTEST TO DEPT AND CAB DESIGNATION OF SWISSAIR AS OFFICIAL CARRIER FOR FIGHT. (PROMOTERS ESTIMATE SEVERAL THOUSAND

AMCITS WILL FLY TO KINSHASA FOR FIGHT). GATT SAYS HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO AIR ZAIRE FLYING CHARTERS TO US FOR EVENT BUT HE WILL OPPOSE SWISSAIR IN VIEW FACT PANAM PROVIDES DIRECT SERVICE.

11. ANY DEPT GUIDANCE AND CARACAS SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.
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